

The Cross Reminds Us

Lenten Devotionals - Week 2

Monday, February 22, 2021

Read Isaiah 42:10-16

Promises

“These are the things I will do, and I will not leave them undone.” (Is. 42:16b NASB)

When God says He will do something, He does it. When He speaks a word, it will come to pass.

The things God promised through the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled, in part, when Jesus came. Rough ground was leveled to prepare His way, sight was given to the blind, light shone to guide those in darkness. The cross reminds us of so many prophecies fulfilled. The Messiah has come, and He has given His life for us!

The complete fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecies will be known when Jesus comes again to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then all the ends of the earth will be filled with His glory and His children will be safely gathered to sing His praise for eternity.

In the meantime, we have the promises of God to rest upon. When you feel forsaken, forgotten or forlorn, remember that when God makes a promise, He keeps it. When He says He will never leave you, He means it. When He says He will complete the good work He has begun in you, He will do it. When He promises that nothing can separate you from His love, it is true!

Prayer focus: Thank God for His faithfulness to fulfill every prophecy and every promise. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you cling to His promises today.

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Read Matthew 7:24-29

Authority

“When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished ... for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.” (Mt. 7:28-29 NASB)

The people Jesus spoke to sensed something very special about Him. As a matter of fact, they were astonished! This was teaching like they had never heard before – full of power and authority. Yet Jesus did not come to lord it over them. He came down to the level of ordinary folks. He walked the dusty streets with his rag-tag band of disciples. He ate with tax collectors. He played with children.

Jesus explained why He had come when He quoted Isaiah 61:1-2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me ... to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners.” The authority people sensed in Jesus flowed from who He was – the promised One, anointed with the Spirit to be the Savior of all.

The changeless Jesus is still full of authority. His eternal Words are true. His cross forever stands. The Gospel is still the power of God for salvation for all who will believe.

Prayer focus: Thank the Savior for the authority and truth with which He speaks to us in Scripture. Pray for confidence to share His Word with others.

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Read Isaiah 60:1-3

The Light Has Come

“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” (Is. 60:1 RSV)

In a dark room, even a dim light can seem quite bright. On a clear evening, with no city lights to interfere, the stars sparkle brightly against the black sky. We don't turn on the lamps in our homes during the day, but only as dusk approaches and the rooms become blanketed in darkness. It's the darkness, in fact, that makes us appreciate the light.

Into our dark world, God sends the light. “For God who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6 NASB)

A song by David Slater from the early days of contemporary Christian music asks, “Have you seen Jesus my Lord?” and then answers with these lyrics:

*Have you ever stood at the cross with a Man hanging in pain?
Seen the look of love in His eyes? Then I say, you've seen Jesus my Lord.*

In the darkness of the cross, a light shines in the face of Christ. And His eyes look at you with love.

Prayer focus: Jesus, Light of the world, come into my life. Cast out the darkness and shine in my heart.

Thursday, February 25, 2021

Read Romans 3:21-28

The Gift

“Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3:23-24 RSV)

I tried to look happy and content, but it didn't seem fair. Everyone else had opened several Christmas presents, and I had only gotten one. It was a nice gift, to be sure, but I couldn't help feeling just a little bit let down. Then, all of a sudden, my mother jumped up from her seat and ran into the other room. She returned with an armful of presents. “I had hidden these under the bed,” she explained, “And I nearly forgot all about them.” A few of the presents were for me. I opened them enthusiastically. They seemed all the more precious because of the unusual circumstances.

So, why am I sharing this childhood Christmas memory during Lent? What's the point? Simply this: Eternal life is a gift. It comes to us wrapped in the person of Jesus. Far from being hidden under the bed, redemption was accomplished openly, as the cross reminds us. It is ready; it is right there for us, for you.

Don't leave this Gift unopened.

Prayer focus: In your own words, express your faith in the Lord Jesus and unwrap the gift of forgiveness and eternal life He has for you.

Unfathomable Riches

“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.” (Eph. 3:8 NASB)

The apostle Paul felt privileged to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. In his letter to the Ephesians, he describes an amazing array of spiritual blessings for believers:

- adoption as God’s children
- forgiveness of our sins
- redemption through Jesus’ blood
- grace freely bestowed
- hope in Christ
- reconciliation with God and other believers
- the Holy Spirit as a pledge of our inheritance

No wonder Paul says that in Christ we have unfathomable riches! And the list could go on and on. What all these riches have in common is that they come to us through the cross. Without Jesus’ death on our behalf, without Him paying the price for our sins, we would still be lost and without hope. But, praise God, the cross reminds us that we are possessors of unfathomable riches. If you ever need a dose of encouragement, ponder the riches that are yours in Jesus!

Prayer focus: Praise God for imparting His riches to you. Take some time to name His blessings one by one.

(Written by Janice Brauer, Peace Member - 2021)